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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

November 28, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Edmund S. Muskie *ESM*

1. OAS General Assembly - We accomplished our major objectives at the Tenth OAS General Assembly which concluded Thanksgiving Day. Your presence and strong speech demonstrated our interest in the Hemisphere and reemphasized basic OAS principles. We were successful in achieving a constructive compromise resolution on human rights which strongly endorses the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and specifically names the countries, including Argentina, which have been subjects of critical reporting by the IAHRC. The resolution calls upon countries which have not yet done so to correct remaining violations. We also obtained a resolution which maintains the isolation of the Garcia Meza regime in Bolivia. While rejecting our proposal for a reduction in the US percentage contribution, the GA again committed itself to developing a new quota system within the coming year. The Assembly also passed resolutions calling upon us to reconsider our embargo on fish products from Ecuador, and resolved OAS employee salary issues. (U)

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2. Palme Mission - Special UN Envoy Olaf Palme has secured an agreement in principle from Iran and Iraq for the safe passage of approximately 63 foreign ships trapped in the Shatt Al Arab waterway. Palme indicated to Kurt Waldheim that a number of technical points, including the clearing of the waterway, had to be clarified in order to proceed with the evacuation. This is the first, limited agreement by both Iran and Iraq since the outbreak of hostilities. Palme said both governments have agreed not to fire on departing ships flying the Red Cross flag and their national colors.

The British and other owners of trapped vessels were active several weeks ago soliciting support for such an agreement. However, given the technical problems involved, it is doubtful whether any of the trapped ships will be able to exit the Shatt in the near future.

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3. European Summit -- Draft of the Mideast Declaration -

We have been given in confidence a copy of the Mideast section of the declaration to be issued by the European Heads of Government at the end of the December 1-2 summit. It recapitulates but does not go beyond the principles laid down in the Venice Declaration this past June. The only new initiative proposed is a second round of EC contacts with the parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute following on the talks conducted earlier this year by Luxembourg Foreign Minister Thorn. The second contact mission would be carried out by another senior European personality, as yet not designated, and would be held in the first months of 1981. A follow-on report would be presented to the European Council at its March 30-31 meeting in the Netherlands.

Assuming that no significant changes are made in the draft text in the next four days, the Europeans appear to have decided to defer any major new effort. One reason for this may be to allow the incoming Administration time to decide how it intends to pursue the Middle East peace process in 1981. The Europeans may also have taken into account the present divisions in the Arab world, which clearly affect the ability of the Arabs to react to the European initiatives. (C)

4. Libya Protests U.S. Maneuvers in Egypt - Libyan authorities have strongly protested recent US maneuvers in Egypt, calling them "a serious threat not only to the safety and security of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya but to the safety and security of the region as a whole." The Libyans claim that during the maneuvers "violations of Libya's airspace and territorial waters" occurred which "will be met by force if necessary."

The Libyans are paranoid about what they perceive as the Egyptian threat and it was inevitable the rapid deployment exercise in Egypt would evoke a response. The vehemence of this note, however, reaffirms how sensitive the Libyans are on this subject.

Neither during this exercise nor at any other time in the past two months have US vessels or aircraft entered into territory claimed by Libya. (Libya's claims are extensive and not recognized by us.) As to ground forces, during Bright Star our troops got no further than 20 miles west of the Nile (about 300 miles from the Libyan border).

Because of its tone and content we plan to reject this note. We will inform the Libyans orally that at no point during the maneuvers did our aircraft enter territory they claim. We will also emphasize we do not accept their extravagant territorial claims.

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- 3 -

5. El Salvador - Yesterday morning a group of heavily armed men entered the Office of Judicial Assistance, a branch of the Archbishop's office, and seized at least six leaders of El Salvador's leftist Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), including FDR President Enrique Alvarez. Upon learning the news, Ambassador White telephoned the Minister of Defense and several members of the Junta to express his grave concern.

So far the bodies of five of the abducted FDR leaders have been found. An extreme right terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the killings.

The Salvadoran government has denied both publicly and privately any participation by its security forces in the incident. Its investigation has not developed any information which would lead to the arrest of the perpetrators.

We were expediting for your decision a recommendation on the leasing of six helicopters to the Salvadoran government which you discussed with Junta member Duarte on Wednesday. We are now withholding action until we can assess the impact of yesterday's killings on the advisability of our furnishing helicopters to the military. As part of our assessment Ambassador White will be consulting with Duarte and other Junta members.

Attached is a memorandum of a telephone conversation between Duarte and Assistant Secretary Bill Bowdler. (S)

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Evening Reports (State), 11/11/80